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SOURCE Nan-fang Jih-pao.SABOTEUR CAUSES DISASTROUS FIRE IN NAN-NING

The following news dispatch from the 5 August 1951 issue of a Communist newspaper, the Canton Nan-fang Jih-pao, confirms a news item from the 6 August 1951 issue of the independent Hong Kong Hsing-tao Jih-pao.

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This report not only confirms the Hsing-tao Jih-pao report as to the seriousness of the problem of sabotage faced by the Communist authorities, but also may serve as a factor in evaluating the general validity of news reports on mainland affairs appearing in Hong Kong newspapers.

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At midnight on 23 July 1951 the Heng-yang Railway Bureau's storehouse of materials and engineering supplies for the Lai-pin--Chen-nan-kuan branch railway, situated on Hua-pei Chieh, was set on fire by a US-Chiang special agent who had secreted himself in the city and gained admission to the premises by stealth. The flames spread to the explosives magazine, causing a terrific explosion which demolished the dwelling houses of more than 470 families and dormitories of railway employees, situated on Hua-pei, Hua-tung, and Hua-ch'iang Chiehs.

More than 1,700 persons were affected by this disaster, including 18 persons killed, 7 missing, and 392 wounded more or less seriously. The property loss was also very heavy. Through the efforts of firemen, soldiers, and members of people's organizations, the fire was extinguished in about an hour. The victims of the fire were temporarily housed in four places, including the buildings of Primary School No 10.

Hsieh Ya-liao, who was wounded and whose house was destroyed, angrily declared, "Those inhuman special agents should be captured and dealt with severely. When I recover from my wounds, I intend to help the government suppress these antirevolutionary elements."

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People of all circles in Nan-ning have formed a relief committee and have begun relief work, providing shelter, food, cooking utensils, and small cash loans. The committee has called on all the people to learn a lesson from this bloody incident, to shake off all benumbing complacency, arouse themselves to a sense of alarm, take an active part in guarding against fires, poisoning, and thievery, and to help put down all forms of antirevolutionary activity. The committee also pointed out that the death-dealing US-Chiang special agents will soon be wiped out and criminal incendiaries will be tried and severely punished.

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